

How To Use The Brochure

This brochure is a self-guided walking tour of 1 of 5 Historic Districts in the City of Marshfield. Inside the brochure you'll find a map of the District and its historic resources. Several properties are featured with photos, architectural information and other interesting facts.

For each tour, we've mapped a recommended starting point and walking route. Distances and estimated tour times are provided. On street parking is available at the starting points. The walking routes will bring you past the most historic sites within the districts.

We encourage you to read the story of each District and reflect back in time as you stroll through Marshfield's Historic Neighborhoods.



Most of the houses in the Districts are private residences and are not open to the public. Please respect the owners' privacy and avoid trespassing on private property. Please view these properties only from the public right-of-way.

Brief History of Marshfield

More than anything else, the city of Marshfield grew out of the marriage of the railroad and lumber industries. Surrounding hardwood forests, patches of pine, and the need to transport logs, frontier labor and goods, provided a commercial incentive for individuals to carve a railroad path through the area. In 1872, Louis Rivers built a double log cabin near the corner of what is now North Chestnut and Depot Streets, determined to capture the potential of an inn business that came with the projected path of the Wisconsin Central Railroad. Rivers purchased the land from John J. Marsh, whom the city is said to be named after.

The fledgling city was jeopardized by a fire that started in the Upham Company lumber yards on June 27, 1887. The blaze spread rapidly, ultimately claiming 250 businesses and homes. It brought devastation and financial ruin to much of the community. When Upham raised his flag the next morning to indicate that the lumber plant would be rebuilt, he set the tone for Marshfield residents' renewed energy and resolve. The community recovered and gained strength after the fire, adding numerous buildings to meet growing

needs. Railroad traffic also increased: The volume in lines and users was second only to Milwaukee, earning Marshfield the nickname of "Hub City." After the turn of the century, some notable shifts took place in the city's economy. Dr. Karl Doege and five other doctors formed a group medical practice, now known as the Marshfield Clinic, in the downtown Thiel building. And, after most of the hardwood stands were cleared, agriculture – notably cheesemaking – became more prominent. However, lumber-related industries still retained a strong presence in Marshfield.



Marshfield's historic buildings, in various architectural forms, remain solid witness to the hard work and commitment of individuals seeking to better their lives in a different time. These buildings give us a glimpse of Marshfield's past, an understanding of location and form, and pleasure in their unique presence in our community.

Walking Tour Brochure Series by the Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee:

- Central Avenue Historic District
- Pleasant Hill Residential Historic District
- Upham House Historic District
- West Fifth Street – West Sixth Street Historic District
- West Park Street Historic District

For more information contact:
Historic Preservation Committee
630 S. Central Avenue
P.O. Box 727
Marshfield, WI 54449
<http://ci.marshfield.wi.us/historic/>

Department of Planning and Economic Development
(715) 486-2074

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What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the official national list of historic properties in America worthy of preservation. Through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's NRHP is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

What is the State Register of Historic Places?

The State Register of Historic Places (SRHP) is Wisconsin's official list of state properties worthy of preservation. The SRHP was established in 1989 and is managed by the Division of Historic Preservation at the Wisconsin Historical Society. The state register uses the same criteria for listing as the National Register except that the special considerations are not applicable.

The Marshfield Register

Several individual properties as well as five districts comprising hundreds of properties are listed in both the SRHP and the NRHP in Marshfield. The districts include the Central Avenue Historic District, Pleasant Hill Residential Historic District, Upham House Historic District, West Fifth Street – West Sixth Street Historic District and the West Park Street Historic District. The individual properties listed include the Central Wisconsin State Fair Round Barn, Marshfield Senior High School, Willard D. Purdy Junior High and Vocational School, Governor William H. Upham House and the Wahle – Laird House.

Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee

The Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) is made up of seven members appointed by the mayor and approved by Common Council; one architect, one historian, one plan commission member, and three citizens. The HPC serves to recommend and designate historic structures, sites, and districts as well as review, recommend, and approve legislation and programs that benefit historic preservation.

Brief history of the Upham Mansion District: This residential historic neighborhood boasts the famous Italianate style Upham Mansion, plus 10 additional residential homes of various Italianate, Queen Anne and Period Revival styles and a fine 1920’s Neo-Gothic Revival style church. The district is home to several houses that survived the Great Marshfield Fire of 1887, which ironically started just one block North West of the district. These are the oldest buildings in Marshfield today.



1. 208 S. Chestnut Ave

The Neo-Gothic architecture was a design of A. A. Honeywell of Indianapolis, Indiana. It was built in 1924 for \$77,000 to replace the clapboard-clad church built in 1878, which had burned down in 1885. The church was built in a cruciform shape of reddish brown brick. The arched window openings still retain their original stained-glass windows. It is presently used as the Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts.



2. 206 W. 3rd Street

This structure was the first Merrill H. Wheeler house, which embodies the Queen Ann style of architecture, built in 1880. The Stick Style two-story home had a decorative front gable. Mrs. Cora Kelly Wheeler was the sister of Mrs. Mary Kelly Upham, wife of Governor William H. Upham. Merrill H. Wheeler was the manager of the Upham Company Store.



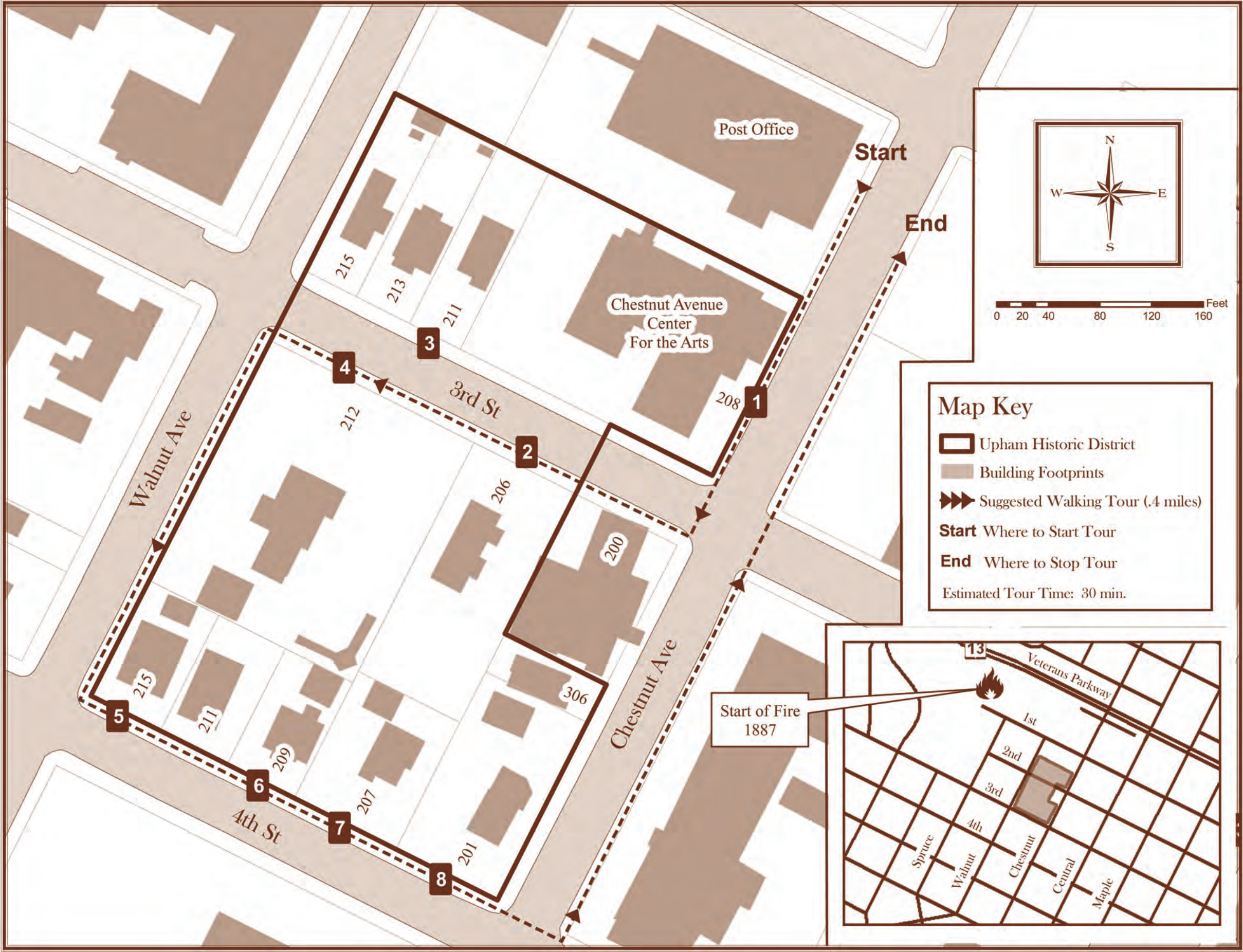
3. 211 W. 3rd Street

Built for James B. Bordon sometime between 1884 and 1887. This Queen Ann style home had survived the Great Marshfield Fire in 1887. Edgar A. and Lillian Guensburg lived in the house for several years. Edgar was manager for The Fair Store. The building is now the home of Studio 211.



4. 212 W. 3rd Street, Upham Mansion

This home was built in 1881 for Marshfield’s most prestigious citizen, William H. Upham. This was the first home in Marshfield to have electricity and running water. Listed on the National Register of Historical Places, this restored home serves as the center for the North Wood County Historical Society, and contains historical archives of the community and the surrounding areas. Stop in and take a tour of Upham family history. Step back in time to the Victorian era and experience memorabilia from the Upham family and Marshfield itself.



5. 215 W. 4th Street

This home was built on the grounds of the mansion stables in 1908 for Charles J. Spar. It is typical American Foursquare architecture with a full width enclosed front porch with both first and second story screened porches at the back. The original clapboard siding is still beneath the stucco that was placed on the home prior to 1974. Charles J. Spar bought Banner Mills and renamed it Spar’s Cereal Mills.



6. 209 W. 4th Street

The home of John Burns was a Queen Ann style home built between 1904 and 1912. John H. Burns was a conductor.



7. 207 W. 4th Street

The second house of Merrill H. Wheeler was built between 1895 and 1900. With clapboard, wood shingle siding and a polygonal bay, this was one of the first Queen Ann style homes of the area. It also had a multi-gable roof and full width front porch.



8. 201 W. 4th Street

Home to Governor Upham’s nephew Frank R. Upham, this home was built in 1882. It is an Italianate Style home with ornate bracketed eaves, designed by T. F. Vannedom. Many of the architectural detail, both inside and out, are exactly as seen with the Governor’s home. This was also one of the few homes to survive the Great Marshfield Fire.